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VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB

VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

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January 2012

President's Message-The Feedline

By Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX

First and foremost, I hope that all of you had a great Christmas and New Year's Day celebration and that both days were safe for yourself and your family members! There will be a lot of happenings this year since it's the year that has been discussed and talked about with regards to Mayan calendar. There is no way anyone can say that any of the "what is or what if's" are going to happen. But if we wake up on the morning of 22nd the day after Dec. 21 as per the dire predictions and find that our planet has been split in two or the entire Pacific coastline as we know it is completely gone (providing that you were smart to leave town and was somewhere else), then we should hope there is enough hard liquor in the motel room or where you were at to get you through the problem at hand which is: What do I do now? I do know that amateur radio will be even more valuable as a tool than it ever was known to be!!

Yours truly was set to be this month's guest speaker, but because my topic needed some hardware and it didn't get to me in a timely manner as I was expecting, this month's presentation will be moved to next month instead. It will be an interesting presentation and if there is no rain at that meeting, maybe I'll include some real time activity with it! On another sad note, one of our members (Jorge Vidal, KK4XU) is having surgery for an eye vision problem and I would like both he and his family to know he is in our prayers for a full recovery. In news from the ARRL recently (for those who do not get this weekly email newsletters), one of the few remaining companies who provided BPL service is closing their doors due to financial issues and the article is suggesting that the few remaining companies providing this service to close down their operations and to look elsewhere to provide their services. The BPL service has been a problem for us hams and hopefully the horizon is getting brighter for all!

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With the lack of winter rain that we usually get, I would like all of us members to think about setting aside some of our personal time this year and lend a hand to the Vacaville Fire Protection District. With the loss of the redevelopment agencies along with the funds that provided a lot of various services and with the lack of rain, this year will be especially fierce in terms of fire danger and strained budgets. I know that we have club members who have vehicles with radios in them or readily able to mount their radios. In talking with other club officers, I've found out that in years past, our club was able to help out the VVFPD be providing extra eyes for those fire prone areas so that when something did happen, the response time from the VVFPD was minimal. It's my understanding that their district covers not only the surrounding areas from where our club meets each month, but also areas out in Elmira and Dixon as well. So if you are contacted and if you are able to help out the VVFPD, I know that they would greatly appreciate it!

As the new club president, I would like our club to either sponsor a Fox Hunt event that I know if it is done correctly, it would be an enjoyable event for those who attended it and participated in it. I will be contacting our other club officers and directors to discuss our club holding such an event. By entertaining such an event, it would most likely generate interest from individuals who are not hams and I would very much like to see young ladies and men into possibly becoming a ham and to become a member of our club because in my opinion, there is simply more in life than texting and gabbing on a cell phone. Being able to expose others to the amateur radio hobby I think would be a rewarding experience. Don't you think so?

I know we all enjoyed the presentation given by Richard D. Straw last year when he was able to come to our club and give his radio related presentation program. I would like to encourage those club members who feel that they have a worthwhile radio related subject in which to give a presentation. I know of a few members that I will be contacting to discuss a possible presentation and if any of you feel that you'd like to do the same, please contact me.

In closing, I hope that all of the members who attended the Christmas party at King's Buffet had a great time. I managed to get the VVFPD to let us have the BBQ pit last year and I think everyone who attended it last year would like to do it again. I had a great time. Did you?

Until next month, be safe and be well!

Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX, President
freonfiz@pacbell.net

Around the Shack

By Jerry Olive, KD6WKY

I got my HF station put back together in plenty of time for the 10 meter contest and RAC Winter Contest just before Christmas. Some of you may remember I completely disassembled my station in order to remodel the interior of our home from ceiling to walls to floor. The only way you can do that is to take everything out…everything. Talk about dirt!

When I put my station back together I put in my back up radio, the Kenwood TS-450SAT. This is a fine radio. I have all the roofing filters in it and really like having plenty of knobs on the face of the rig. More modern rigs have fewer knobs and are run via menus from a menu knob. My intention is to sell my Kenwood TS-570D and put that money toward a new Kenwood TS-590S when the time comes. Call me if you want to buy my TS-570D, it's a sweet radio.

Let me tell you, that 10 meter contest was smoking hot! I worked it with low power 100w, CW only, no spotting sources of any kind. I achieved a personal record of 401 contacts in 48 states and provinces for a claimed score of over 105,000 points. I even had 13 DX stations. I read that the ARRL 10 meter contest for 2011 set new records in several categories.

I don't think I have ever gotten more than a few thousand points and about 20 states ever. In 2007 I only worked two states and 23 contacts total. I could only hear line of sight stations for the most part. I thought I was on CB or something.

I think anyone that worked the 2011 contest set a personal record, all you had to do was turn on the radio on 10 meters and it was wall to wall people calling CQ Contest. Just on CW the band was shoulder to shoulder from 28.000 MHz to 28.200 MHz; every few KC's there was a station. It was incredible.

The Radio Amateurs of Canada RAC sponsor a contest on the Saturday prior to the first day of winter and summer. I worked the winter contest for awhile on that Saturday and had some fun.

In looking back at my log for December 2011, most of my contacts and QSO's were on the upper bands even late into the evenings out toward the west. I worked Saipan (been there, very cool place to visit WWII history) after 10pm local time on the 15 meter band one evening. I have not had to use my amplifier much either.

I received a very nice QSL card today from the P29NI DXpedition of last April 2011. I'll bring it with me to the club meeting. The confirmation was a 30 meter band contact which is CW at 1444 UTC on 13 April 2011. Early in the morning to the west 30m and 40m can be open for good DX work. Drinking morning coffee and working DX is a wonderful thing!

I received confirmation from the organizing committee that I can attend the 2012 DX Convention in Visalia and <u>not have to buy a meal ticket</u> to hear the keynote speaker. I have been complaining about the food at the Holiday Inn in Visalia for a few years now and even made a complaint to the Tulare County Health Department about their 2008 Saturday evening meal with their white mystery sauce. That's all I'll say about that…it was bad.

I'm about ready to send a batch of QSL cards off to the ARRL Outgoing Bureau. I send them a stack about once a year now. If I wait until I have over eight ounces of cards the price goes way down when you do the math. The downside is I probably have to wait longer to get a confirmation via the buro. I was looking over my log and have a few countries out there that I have been waiting on for a couple of years now. I was able to email UK9AA in Uzbekistan who confirmed I am in his log, but he never got my QSL card. I sent a second QSL card to him direct last week.

I'm going to explore the idea of a Special Event Station for my shack this year. I want to run a KD6WKY "I'm still here!" Special Event Station on December 21, 2012. I wonder how many others will do the same thing. I guess I'll have to wait and see!

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB—2011 ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Vice President: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Secretary: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Director: Richard Craig, KJ6MIB
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6ZGB
Director: Tom Christman KE6MDM

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Newsletter Publisher & Distributor: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

KAØXTT Needs QSL Cards

The ABC Television program Last Man Standing starring Tim Allen as Mike Baxter KAØXTT needs QSL cards for their prop inventory. Send your QSL card to: Mike Baxter, KAØXTT, 4024 Radford Avenue, Bungalow 17, Studio City, CA 91604.

Free Ink Cartridges

Bob Hewitt, K6HEW has three HP ink cartridges available. HP #45 black, HP #56 black, HP #57 color are all waiting to be matched up with your HP printer. Call Bob for details or ask him about it at the next club meeting.

Amateur Radio Quiz: As Seen on TV!

By H. Ward Silver, N0AX
n0ax@arrl.net

*With ham radio getting a little exposure in the form of **Mike Baxter, KA0XTT**, on the hit ABC comedy **Last Man Standing**, let's have some fun remembering some other hammy appearances in the media (Thanks to the **AD7DB**, **KB9MWR** and **AC6V** websites for the references!).*

1) Which of the **Munsters** sometimes operated a ham radio?
a. Lily
b. Herman
c. Grandpa
d. Eddie

2) In the movie ***Frequency***, which manufacturer's radio was used?
a. Hallicrafters
b. EF Johnson
c. Heathkit
d. Collins

3) In the movie ***Independence Day***, military officers used which mode of ham radio?
a. SSB
b. AM
c. CW
d. RTTY

4) What call sign does Ellie Arroway use in ***Contact***?
a. W9GFO
b. W9WNV
c. W9GFZ
d. W9AW

5) Who played the ham in the ***Twilight Zone*** episode ***The Monsters are Due on Maple Street***?
a. Leslie Nielsen
b. Claude Akins
c. Ronald Reagan
d. Hedy Lamar

6) Doris Day used ham radio to contact "Pop," played by what real-life ham in the movie ***The Glass Bottom Boat***?
a. Andy Devine, WB6RER
b. Joe Walsh, WB6ACU
c. Barry Goldwater, K7UGA
d. Arthur Godfrey, K4LIB

7) Which late-night TV show host sponsored a contest between two hams (K7JA and K6CTW) using Morse code and two text-messaging champs?
a. David Letterman
b. Johnny Carson
c. Jay Leno
d. Craig Ferguson

9) In *The Simpsons*, which of the following characters does *not* have a ham radio license?
a. Principal Skinner
b. Homer
c. Selma
d. Moe

10) Which show featured a ham radio phone patch between a soldier and his girlfriend back home?
a. ***M*A*S*H***
b. ***McHale's Navy***
c. ***Combat!***
d. ***Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.***

Bonus Question: Who were the Tennessee Valley Indians?

Answers are on the last page above the membership form

Solar Measurements — What do they mean?

Scot, K9JY in DX

It's been so long since I've paid any attention to the sunspot and solar flux numbers, I've forgotten what they all mean. Pulling out some the references in the drawer revealed some simple applications of the numbers.

Sunspot measurement

Sunspot numbers are shown as a "tens" number relating to the number of "regions" on the site and a "singles" number relating to the number of sunspots associated with a "region."So if there are no sunspots, the number is understandably zero.

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

The Vaca Valley Radio Club has proudly served the Northern Solano County Area since 1988. We pride ourselves in providing a friendly place for radio amateurs to meet and improve their operating skills.

We participate in public service events throughout the year and are always ready to assist with communications during times of emergency.

Browse our website for more information about our club. If you have any questions please email us at w6vvr@vacavalleyradio.net or call 707-448-5665 for assistance.

The Repeater is Published by the Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143, An ARRL Affiliated Club. Founded 1987, Chartered 1988 General Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM 420 Vine Street Fire Station.

Wheelchair accessible

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at:
http://vacavalleyradio.net

Club repeater in Vacaville:W6VVR 145.470 MHz(-) pl 127.3
The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 8pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.200(-)

But, a single sunspot on the sun would translate into a sunspot number of 11. The tens spot for having one region and the singles number for one sunspot in the region.

Solar Flux measurement

Solar Flux is the 10.7 cm measurement from the daily 1700Z value recorded at Ottawa, Ontario. The solar flux varies from 66 — the lowest number associated with zero sunspots — to several hundred. It is a more "linear" view of sunspot numbers.

A very small change in the solar flux can have a big change in propagation. For example, here at the low of the sunspot cycle, a solar flux moving from 66 to 72 could mean longer openings on 20-meters until after sunset or even some 15-meter openings during the day.

An 80 reading will mean that 15-meters should open.

A 90 reading will mean that 10-meters should be open.

The A index

The A index is the measure of the geomagnetic activity or radio absorption of the ionosphere. The higher the A index, the more absorption and the weaker the radio signals. The A index range is near zero to several hundred.

As "rules of thumb," readings below 10-15 usually signify good band conditions. Readings over 30 usually mean bad band conditions.

The K index

The K index also measures radio absorption like the A index, but it is reported every 3-hours instead of every 24. Consequently, the K index more accurately reflects current band conditions than the daily A index.

The K index varies from 0 to 9, with 0-2 suggesting reasonably good conditions. The higher the number, the more absorption from disturbed conditions will exist.

Solar flux and A-K indexes work together

You always want low absorption on the bands, regardless of the solar sunspots.

The reason is that 160 and 80 meters perform very well with low sunspot numbers and low absorption, but aren't very good with high absorption.

Yet 10 meters can be fabulous with a solar flux of 110 and low absorption and terrible if the K index and the associated absorption is 9.

So you always want low absorption, regardless of the sunspot number.

Propagation is not an exact science. There are weird anomalies all over the place all the time (which is one of the reasons ham radio is so much fun). These numbers should provide some good guidelines, however, to get you used to looking at those solar numbers again now that the new solar cycle 24 has started.

Scot, K9JY

ARISSat-1 Re-enters Earth's Atmosphere

According to the AMSAT News Service, the ARISSat-1 satellite has re-entered Earth's atmosphere. Reception reports indicate that ARISSat-1 stopped transmitting Wednesday morning, January 4, and was destroyed soon after.

The last telemetry reports indicated that the internal temperature had topped 167 degrees Fahrenheit and was rising rapidly. Konstantin, RN3ZF, sent a reception report of a pass at 0842 UTC and stated, "The telemetry was absent, voice messages were not legible, very silent and interrupted. Most likely, I saw the last minutes in the life of the satellite."

ARISSat-1/KEDR was deployed from the International Space Station on August 3, 2011 during EVA-29 on by Cosmonaut/Flight Engineers Sergei Volkov and Alexander Samokutyaev. The satellite carried a student experiment from Kursk State University in Russia that measured atmospheric density. Students from around the world provided the voices for the FM voice announcements.

ARISSat-1 achieved several "firsts" for Amateur Radio in space:

- First flight test of the AMSAT Software Defined Transponder, which included an FM voice downlink cycling between student messages, spoken telemetry and SSTV; a 16 kHz bandwidth linear transponder; a CW beacon carrying telemetry and call signs of radio amateurs (noting their significant contributions to amateur radio in space) and a robust, forward-error-corrected 1kbps BPSK digital downlink carrying satellite telemetry and Kursk experiment telemetry.

- Development and release of the *ARISSatTLM* software for PC and Mac platforms to allow amateur stations worldwide to enjoy reliable reception of the BPSK and CW telemetry.

- A new Integrated Housekeeping Unit design.

- A new Power Management System design.

Our thanks to the AMSAT News Service for the information used in this story.

Radio Amateurs Not Affected by Narrowbanding Requirements

The FCC released a *Public Notice* on January 6, reminding land mobile licensees, frequency coordinators and equipment manufacturers that they have less than one year to transition to narrowband operations in the 150-174 and 421-512 MHz bands. While the latter frequency range includes amateur service allocations, radio amateurs are not affected by the narrow banding requirement. Land mobile operation is permitted in parts of the 421-430 MHz band in the areas around Detroit, Cleveland and Buffalo, and land mobile licensees in these areas are among those who will have to migrate to narrowband (12.5 kHz or narrower) technology by January 1, 2013. Amateur operation is not permitted along the Canadian border (north of Line A as defined in the FCC Rules) in the band 420-430 MHz.

Clyde Hood WH6AB—Silent Key

In late December it was reported to the club that Clyde Hood WH6AB passed away. Clyde was our activities coordinator for many years until his health prevented him from attending planning meetings for Merriment on Main and March of Dimes just to mention a few events. Clyde will be missed and he made his mark on our club.

Answers

1) b -- Herman used the call sign W2XRL4
2) c
3) c
4) a
5) b
6) d
7) c -- The episode that aired on May 13, 2005.
8) b
9) d
10) a -- Klinger is married to his sweetheart back home by Father Mulcahy via ham radio during the third season ***Bonus Answer*** -- Hams used this phrase to refer to TVI phonetically as a sort of code when using AM, because the person whose TV receiver was receiving the interference could understand the detected audio.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely — Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
Street: _____
City: _____Zip: _____
Phone: (_____) _____-_____OK to Publish ?(_____)
License Class: _____ ARRL Member ?(_____)
E-Mail Address_____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

MEMBER Dues --------- $20.00_____
Each Family Member -- $ 2.00_____
Student ---------- $ 5.00_____
Repeater/Autopatch donation ---_____
Call/Name badge -------- $11.00_____
Optional ARRL membership
ARRL dues ---------- $37.00_____

Total----------_____
Paid by CASH: ____ Check #_____
DATE:_____

Mail to : Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143